

of the Andaman group, and then passes through the southern portion of the Tenasserim Province.

On the Malabar coast and in Tenasserim there will not be much chance, I fear, of any observations. In the Tenasserim Province there will be a good deal of the rainy monsoon to pass through; on the Bombay coast it will be nearly over. I fancy, too, that the Andamans will not have very fine weather, but on the Madras coast and to the east of the Ghauts there will be everywhere almost certainly fine weather.

Mr. Pogson will doubtless do his part, but Masulipatam is readily accessible from both Calcutta and Madras by steamer, and is itself a port at which they call. It will be quite in the power of the Government, if so disposed, to collect at that place a corps of practised observers; and even if they will not do this, I have little doubt that, if their officers are permitted to go, there will be some (possibly enough) observers who would form a party for the occasion. Probably the Council will not think that it would be too much to ask that the Government should, by organising an observing party or two, give the business that element of discipline and unity of action which volunteer observers, collected from various parts of a large country, will almost necessarily want.

The season is favourable, being a time when the officers of the Indian Survey will be in quarters, and when they could be best spared. I know nothing of what may be my own station in India, but I much fear that I have but little chance of sharing in what is done. I will, however, take in hand the accurate computation of the Central Line and limit of Totality, and hope before my return to India I shall be in a position to circulate to possible observers what may guide their arrangements.

22 Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square,
Jan. 2nd, 1866.

Astronomical Postulate regarding the Verification of Janamajaya's Eclipse. By G. Peacock, Esq. F.R.G.S.

In the ninth volume of *Bengal Asiatic Researches*, published in Calcutta in 1809, at page 447, the following passage occurs, being the purport of the inscription on a brass-plate, one of three dug up, fastened together by a ring on which is the representation of a seal, bearing the figure of a boar with a sun and crescent. It is as follows:—

“Janamajaya, son of Pariskshita, a monarch reigning at Hartinapur, made a progress to the south, and to other quarters, for the purpose of reducing all countries under his domination, and performed a sacrifice for the destruction of serpents, in presence of the God, or Idol, Harrihara, at the confluence of the rivers Tungabhadra and Harida, at the time of

a partial eclipse of the Sun, which fell on a Sunday, in the month of Chaitra, when the Sun was entering the northern hemisphere, the Moon being in the Nakshatra Aswini."

Having completed the sacrifice, the king bestowed gold and land on certain Brahmans of Gautama-grāna, whose names and designations are recited at full length, with the description of the lands granted.

The words of the text are "Chaitramāsa crishna," or the dark half of the month, and a Chaitra answers to the month between 15th March and 15th April, the dark half would seem to imply the time of the *new* Moon for that month, at which time *only* could an Eclipse of the *Sun* happen, and this would be late in March or early in April,—the dark half of the Moon being then turned towards the Earth, and within the limits of 17° in the lunar nodes, as a Solar Eclipse only can happen when the Moon's latitude, as observed geometrically, is less than the term of the semidiameters of the Sun and Moon combined, because the course of the Moon, in its path, being oblique to that of the Sun, makes an angle with it of nearly $5^\circ 35'$; an Eclipse of the Moon can only happen at the time of full Moon, when the Earth is in a right line between it and the Sun.

Now, in examining into the date of the Eclipse named in our text, and working out the Dominical Letter and Epact, according to the tables in the Prayer-Book and those given by Fergusson, it would seem to have been that named in Fergusson's *Astronomy*, at page 217, in Struyck's Catalogue of Eclipses, as having been observed at Constantinople on the 3d April, A.D. 889. The record on the third plate states that the Moon was in "Nakshatra Aswini," which answers to the zodiacal sign *Aries*, and which would also coincide with the month "Chaitra," or between the 15th March and 15th April; as the sign Aswini, or the Horse's head, comprised a portion, or period of the zodiac, little over thirteen days, the dark shadow of the Moon, and therefore the Sun would be in Aswini on the 22d March, coincident, or nearly so, with the sign *Aries*, and would quit Aswini on the 4th April to enter Bharani. I have calculated all the other eclipses of the Sun, happening between the 22d and 31st March, from the year 1261 down to 1699,—twelve in number, or during the period of Aswini's path; but not one of these happened on a Sunday; and no Solar Eclipse took place in Aswini at any period (except the 3d April) answering to Sunday. There was a Solar Eclipse observed at Rome on the 1st April, A.D. 238, and one on the 2d April, 1307, observed at Ferrara, but neither of these fell on a *Sunday*; therefore, I am of opinion that the one named in the text must have occurred on the 3d April, A.D. 889.

Learcrop, 15th November, 1866.